SKETCHES OF POCAHONTAS COUNTY

Section I.

SOME PRELIMINARY WORDS.

A Hebrew Prophet utters this impressive admonition: "Hear this ye old men and give ear all ye inhabitants of the land, hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers? Tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation."—Joel 1, 2–3.

The duty inculcated by these earnest words we,—the Editor; the venerated, aged persons whose memories have with so much fidelity preserved the traditions and the oral unwritten history that have been transmitted from their pioneer ancestry to their children and children's children; the advance subscribers; and the printer publishers,—hereby endeavor to perform.

These sketches are designed to illustrate, in some measure, the history of Pocahontas County, located as it is in one of the most remarkable regions of the whole habitable earth. The territory referred to extends from the Ohio Valley to the Blue Ridge, and from the Potomac to the sources of New River. There may be other regions of like limits equally favored with the bounties of nature, but none to surpass it, when all

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things are duly considered. The spontaneous resources for sustaining human and animal existence exceed all ordinary means of estimating. The streams were alive with fish and aquatic birds; the forests teemed with uncounted herds of bison, elk, and deer, bears, wolves, panthers, wild cats, foxes and smaller animals of great variety roamed at will. Flocks of turkeys, grouse, quail, and the wild pigeons abounded in fabulous profusion. The branches of as noble trees as ever grew, —trees that would be the pride of royal parks,—were occupied by throngs of birds of bright and varied plumage and sweet notes, thus making the solitary forest scenes beautiful and more than sweetly vocal.

When the pioneers came they found this wilderness paradise just as God the Creator fashioned it, already peopled by a branch of the human race, men, women, and children, that had been here for centuries. There were indications that these had been preceded by a still older class of occupants.

As to the American Indians found by the pioneers, the question of their origin, who they were and whence came they has been a much discussed ethnological problem for the past four hundred years by Spanish, English, French, and American scholars. Egypt, China, and Norteastern Asia, as well as Northwestern Europe, have passed under searchingly profound consideration as sources whence the aboriginal people of North and South America have migrated at prehistoric periods. The language, religious traditions, manners, and usages of the Indians that occupied the region whereof our county forms a part seem to some writers

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suggestive of Hebrew origin, and might be a remnant of the so termed Lost Tribes of Israel. On this theory the Book of Mormon was written, and our intelligent readers know something of what has resulted whenever the Mormon question is broached.

But as the question now stands, that of origin as to what nation or nations of the old world whence the American Indians have come, the state of the problem is so perplexing that positive truth is not conceded to any one theory. Plausible conjecture is the most that is conceded for the best considered theory of origin.

Hu Maxwell, who has investigated such historical themes with conspicuous ability, says:

"In Mexico to-day the Indians, Mayas, and Aztecs live side by side, and their features and general characteristics show them to be radically the same people, not different races. They are at least as much alike as are Germans and Spanish, the Greeks and the French, and the common origin of these nations is not difficult to trace. It is neither proper nor profitable to enter at length upon the consideration of the origin of the Indians. It is a question which history has not answered, and perhaps never will answer. If the origin of the Indians were known, the origin of the people who built the mounds would be near at hand. But the whole matter is one of speculation and opinion. The favorite conclusion of most authors is that America was peopled from Asia by way of Behring Strait. It could have been done. But the hypothesis is as reasonable that Asia was peopled by emigrants from America who crossed the Behring Strait. It is the same dis-

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tance across, going west or coming east, and there is no historical evidence that America was not peopled first, or that both the old world and the new world were not peopled at the same time; or that each was not peopled independently of the other. Since the dawn of history, and as far back into prehistoric times as the analysis of languages can throw any light, all great migrations have been westward. No westward migration would have given America its inhabitants from Asia, but a migration from from the west would have peopled Asia from America. As a matter of fact Behring Strait is so narrow that the tribes on either side can cross to the other at pleasure, and with less difficulty than the Amazon River can be crossed near its mouth."

In our sketches we will not spend much time on theories of origin, but give earnest attention to facts, and the fact now before us is this, the pioneers found the land they had come from beyond the ocean seas to possess, already occupied by their fellow men, claiming the land as theirs from prehistoric times. The tribe of Indians that laid special claim upon our region by actual possession was the Shawnee; and as the Shawnee had been nurtured and reared in such a surprising goodly land, he ranked among the superior members of the North American aborigines.

The Shawnee Indians preceded the pioneers in actual possession and long use of hunting grounds wellnigh coextensive with the limits already indicated. These Indians had the Ohio Valley as their home place so to speak. Nearly all of the aborigines that waged

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border warfare lived in Ohio adjacent to the present limits of West Virginia, whence they would come to make good their claims to their hunting grounds, and for more than twenty-five years waged cruel hostilities against the pioneers.

The French Jesuit fathers, as early as 1640, had taken and published a missionary census of the total number of Indians in the territory east of the Mississippi, north of the Gulf of Mexico, and south of the St. Lawrence River and the Lakes. The territory referred to in that missionary census includes what now claims our consideration. According to this census the Indians numbered about one hundred and eighty thousand.

It thus appears that the Jesuit Fathers took much pains to inform themselves about this region, and had secured the confidence and attachment of the Shawnees. These alert, tireless, shrewd missionaries always knew a good thing when they saw it, and they seemed to have felt that no brighter gem was in their reach, with which to adorn the tiara of the Holy Father at Rome, than the natural Paradise reported by the Shawnee braves and Huron hunters as their own hunting grounds. No doubt rested in the souls of these devoted missionaries that their paramount duty was to secure and make good for the use of the Holy Father this goodly heritage of the heathen, for it was his as the vicegerent of Christ, to whom God had promised the earth and the fullness thereof. They were ready to sacrifice all the delights of sense, all the luxury of personal ease, and even life itself, to make good a claim so divine.

Nothing in the annals of missionary endeavor is

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more pathetically interesting than what these devoted Jesuit fathers voluntarily endured, in their efforts to propagate the faith, as they express it. First came the missionaries, followed in due time by the French engineers, and the goodly land was explored. The missionaries were quickened in their zeal and confirmed in their faith when they discovered so much that was suggestive of Palestine in so many features. What Moses said and what they had read in the 8th of Deuteronomy about the Holy Land being a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land whose stones are iron and out of whose hills brass might be dug, the Fathers found all duplicated here, and they were not slow to perceive its possibilities could make it materialize into a "land of wheat and barley and vines and fig trees and pomegranates; a land wherein bread would be eaten without scarceness," and nothing really good be lacking, and be moreover a land of oil, olive, and honey.

Since apostolic times no class of men have on record or have displayed more selfdenying energy than the French Father missionaries at the time referred to. Some of these previous to 1640, and at various periods since down to 1774, explored every nook and corner of our region worth looking after, guided by their Shawnee adherents. It is believed that the remains of one of these fathers, or engineers, were plowed up in the Indian Draft, some years ago, near where the Edray branch joins the main stream.

To have a proper appreciation of what it all cost the pioneers in their efforts to have and to hold what is

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now the place of our homes, it would be well to learn something of Shawnee character, as men and warriors.

The leaders that gave our pioneers the most trouble were Pontiac, Chief of the Ottawas; Cornstalk, Killbuck, and Crane. Killbuck annoyed the settlements for a long series of years, and when hostilities ceased went to his home in Ohio, and thereafter paid occasional visits to Wheeling. He became blind, and lived to be more than a hundred years old.

Killbuck had for a comrade, whose efficiency as a warrior made him nearly as dangerous, named Crane, because of his unusually long neck and legs. Crane was an ugly thorn in the flesh, especially to those of the settlers that located on the South Branch, and made himself a conspicuous nuisance never to be forgotten. But little record is to be found of his exploits, but enough is known to give him the distinction of being considered nearly as dangerous as Killbuck.

The Shawnees, the aboriginal people, were here to repel the pioneers for the reason they regarded the land as theirs by inheritance from their fathers, at whose burial mounds they observed solemn rights of worship, and whose exploits they so fervently chanted in war songs and funeral dirges.

Indian troubles continued about thirty years with brief intervals of precarious peace. It is believed on very reliable tradition that for ten years before his death at the battle of Point Pleasant, October 10, 1774, Colonel Charles Lewis was never at home more than a month at a time.

The pioneer Scottish Virginians, ancestors of so

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large proportion of our Pocahontas people, were remote from the seat of the colonial government, poorly provided with means of defense, and were exposed to all the troubles arising from the long and bitter struggle between the French and English for supremacy in the Mississippi Valley. History makes no formal mention of expeditions numbering hundreds of men going out as armed rangers upon the frontier. Nothing but a few unnoticed Acts of Virginia Assembly, acknowledging and commending such services, are available to show that companies of "Rangers," "Independents," or "Volunteers," led by a Lewis, a McClenachan, a Cunningham, a Preston, a Dickinson, a Dunlap, a Moffett, an Alexander, or some one else, armed and equipped at their own charges, penetrated the forests to punish or disperse hostile parties of Indians.

For in times of avowed peace the Indians would allege nominal or supposed wrongs, and thereupon murder defenceless families, then disappear stealthily as panthers, hastening away to their well-nigh inaccessible strongholds beyond the mountains. The Indian leaders, moreover, were foemen worthy of any antagonistic steel. The Emperor Pontiac appears to be the first to wage war against the Scottish Virginians. He was a war chief of the Ottowas, the most influential of the northern tribes, and was conspicuous among the native heroes whose devotion to the interests, of their people, wisdom and eloquence in council, skill in strategy, bravery in battle, have made for them a fame that the proudest warriors of all time might well envy.

One writer speaks of Pontiac as a person of remark-

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able appearance and commanding stature. Another says that in point of native talent, courage, magnanimity, and integrity he will compare without prejudice with the most renowned of civilized rulers and conquerors. It was Pontiac's war in 1763 that required the utmost strength of the Colonies and the strongest support of the British Government to withstand and overcome. It was in obedience to Pontiac's orders and plans that raiding parties pressed far into panic stricken settlements, and among the massacres were the Big Levels and Muddy Creek in Virginia, and the merciless slaughter in the Valley of Wyoming.

Ten or eleven years later another terrific Indian war blazed forth. This was conducted by the Shawnee chief Cornstalk, who when a young warrior was under Pontiac. The Shawnees held all other men in contempt as warriors. Mr Stuart speaks of Cornstalk as distinguished for beauty of person, for agility and strength of frame, in manners graceful and easy, and in movements majestic and princely. He commanded the Indian forces at Point Pleasant. During that very memorable action he was frequently seen moving rapidly along the lines of picked braves, and his marvelous voice was heard above the din of conflict cheering on with his battle cry "Be Strong! Be Strong!"

Colonel Wilson, a British officer, says: "I have heard the famous orators of Virginia—Patrick Henry and Richard Lee— but never have I heard one whose powers of delivery surpassed those of Cornstalk."

As seen and regarded by us as we write, had Cornstalk been successful at the battle of Point Pleasant,

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the war for Independence could not have occurred when it did, and very probably never taken place. For English cavaliers, the French and Spanish missionaries with their Shawnee and other Indian adherents would have made it too uncomfortable for the Scotch-Irish and the Hugenots to remain, and there would not have been a Pocahontas County to write history about, as we know it, and are now preparing. The tide of that very eventful and pivotal battle was turned against Cornstalk and his chosen brnves by the management of Jacob Warwick, a pioneer of Pocahontas County, who now sleeps in his lowly grave six miles west of the Warm Springs, Virginia.

The close of Cornstalk's eventful career in life is one of the most touching events of the kind on historical record since the death of Socrates. Impelled by a magnanimous sense of duty unsurpassed in all barbaric history, in order to be faithful and true to the treaty of peace he had made with the pioneers, Cornstalk came to the fort at Point Pleasant, the scene of his humiliating defeat, to inform the garrison of efforts made by British emissaries to incite the Indians to war against the Virginians during the Revolution. He and his son Ellinipsico were detained as hostages.

In the meanwhile some of the garrison, infuriated by the treacherous death of a comrade by an Indian tramp, resolved to be avenged upon the hostages. Soon as Cornstalk divined their purpose, he turned to his son and said: "My son, the Great Spirit has seen fit that we die together, and has sent you here to that end. It is His will—let us submit. It is all for the

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best." He then faced the persons making ready to slay him, bared his bosom, received seven shots from deadly mountain rifles, and fell lifeless. With him departed the spirit and prestige of the Indian power on the frontier. In thinking of this wonderful person, how very aptly the words apply:

"The Lord of all
The forest heroes, trained in wars,
Quivered and plumed and lithe and tall
And seamed with glorious scars."

Such historical allusions seem needful to aid us now living in forming some adequate conception of what our worthy ancestors had to encounter and overcome in their endeavors to build up their homes, for themselves, and for their sons and daughters, their children and childrens' children. So comparatively silent is general history concerning border warfare that none but special students of pioneer times have anything like a correct apprehension how dangerous and skilful were Indian warriors fighting for hunting grounds, fishing streams, and ancestral graves. While it may be that little, relatively speaking, has been recorded of the events that make up pioneer history, yet it is impossible for those of us who revere our ancestral worthies not to revert often in thought to those sad twenty-five or thirty years in which the weapons must have been fashioned and the characters formed and matured for the stupendous war that was to be fought before the Rose of Sharon planted by Scottish-Virginia hands should bloom and adorn this goodly land and diffuse

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all around its liberty inspiring and soul saving fragrance. With so much at issue in a conflict to be led by savage and civilized leaders of the highest endowments, there is something so sublimely portentous in its significance as to prompt every pious patriot to exclaim in all fervency of spirit:

"Sound, thou trumpet of God, come forth Great Cause, to array us.
King and Leader appear! Thy soldiers sorrowing seek thee."

Having thus considered the character of the Ottowa and Shawnee leaders opposing the early settlers, we will give some attention to the characteristics of our pioneer ancestors, so as to comprehend in a measure how they became qualified to meet and overcome the opposition confronting them, and by their marvellous success opened this "goodly land" for our use and daily comfort, and known and loved by us as "home, sweet home," amid the West Virginia hills.

Of the persons most prominent in the early history of our pioneer ancestry, special mention should be made of Dr John Craig, for the reason that he exerted so much telling influence upon the immediate lives of those persons who pioneered the counties of Pocahontas, Greenbrier, Monroe, and Kanawha. He is moreover a type of the persons whose names were embalmed by so many of our ancestors with all their hearts could give, "their praises and their tears."

Dr Craig was Master of Arts by graduation from the University of Edinburg, Scotland. For twenty-

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five years he ministered to the Old Stone Church, in Augusta County, walking five miles to preaching Sabbath morning, and when Indians were troublesome would carry his own trusty rifle along with Bible and Psalm Book. Services would open at 10 a. m., recess of one hour for lunch at noon, then preaching until sundown. Sometimes, on Sacramental occasions, a candle was needed to read the closing hymns. Then some of the congregation would ride ten or twelve miles to their homes, and after doing up the household chores, would go to bed at midnight. One of his sermons still extant is laid off in fifty-five divisions.

When Braddock was defeated, mainly by the skillful management of Pontiac in 1754, thus leaving all west of the Blue Mountains exposed to Indian incursions, the inhabitants in utter consternation were talking about safety in flight somewhere back to Pennsylvania or over the mountains towards Williamsburg, so as to be near the seat of government, and the safety it implied, the undaunted preacher was opposed to all such schemes. In his journal he thus writes:

"I opposed that scheme as a scandal to our nation, falling below our brave ancestors, (in Scotland) making ourselves a reproach among Virginians, a dishonor to our friends at home, an evidence of cowardice, want of faith and noble Christian dependance on God as able to save and deliver from the heathen; and withal a lasting blot forever on all our posterity."

This valiant soldier of two banners,—the banner of the Cross, and the banner of civil and religious freedom,—advised the erection of forts. In his journal he

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writes: "My own flock required me to go before them in the work, which I did cheerfully, though it cost me one-third of my estate; but the people followed me and my congregation in less than two months was well fortified."

There are numbers of people living in Pocahontas today whose ancestors assisted in the erection of the forts referred to. With such an example, his people maintained their homes most bravely through all the fiery trials of that period so eventful in results, as far reaching as the civilized world and even to the regions beyond. What remains of this brave patriots recorded views indicates that his was a mind characterized by keen, practical sagacity, generous sentiments, and judicious magnificence of reasoning powers. Hence it was he correctly appreciated the actual needs, advantages, perils, and prospects of his surroundings.

Obtuse indeed must one be who fails to perceive something splendid, wonderful in such a man, guided as he had been by a dream in Ireland to his place of service in the wilds of the Virginia Valley. Before leaving Ireland, and while frequently praying for Divine guidance where to go, he had a dream that profoundly impressed him, and it was ever vivid to his memory. After coming to America he followed the stream of immigration up the Valley of Virginia until he came to Fort Defiance, a locality that corresponded with his dream. He at once selected it as a place for his home, where he dwelt, labored, died, and was buried. Honoured for all time be his memory. May his example of life and faith like all

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"the actions of the just,
Smell sweet and blossom in the dust."

The people upon whom such influences of living and practicing were exerted, and from whose habitations invincible defenders went to vanquish foemen like Pontiac, Logan, and Cornstalk, and famous generals from Europe, were mainly of Scotch Irish extraction. The best of such blood is very good, but candor demands the admission that the worst is about as bad as his Majesty the Prince of the Power of the air would have it. These warlike, clannish, iron-handed people did not seek Pennsylvania or the Virginia wilderness to avoid debt or retrieve broken fortunes, as is said of the Cavalier English, neither were they in quest of a refuge where they might praise God as they pleased, yet compel others to do like them, as is often insinuated of the Pilgrims of Plymouth Rock. The Scottish-Virginians came for the most part because there was a fascination in the roominess and liberty that a new realm promises. Moreover there was something attractive for such inquisitive, daring people in the adventures and dangers that abounded.

And they remained the same unyielding characters, whether contending for Christ and His covenant in the old world among the Grampian Hills, or reclaiming the Alleghanies of the New from Indians, ferocious beasts, and venomous reptiles. Unrestrained by redeeming grace, these people were of fiery temperament free-and-easy, sport loving, gallant, fighting at the drop of a hat, racing horses, playing at cards, pitting game chickens, indulging in whiskey freely as water, swearing with an emphasis and rhetorical jingle truly

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surprising. With their faults, nevertheless, they were endowed with resplendent virtues of personal character and when individuals became pious it was not half-way doings with them.

In their religion the Pauline phase had precedence, and so they believed and were sure that God abhors sin with no degree of allowance and deals sternly and righteously with unrepentant sinners. Their belief in the Divine sovereignty was such as to imbue them with that unrelenting persistence under difficulties that so eminently prepared them for the part they were led by Providential guidance to perform, in subduing the pathless wilderness and forming new states.

In regard to the Scottish Virginia women, be it ever remembered in their praise that they were more than equal to their arduous duties in those eventful times. Society was enriched and adorned by the presence of wives, mothers, and sisters whose characters were refined by the sweet uses of adversity, and whose piety was developed and invigorated by most searching tests. The mothers were keepers at home, teaching the children and servants the catechism, and attending church once a month, more or less as opportunities presented. These robust, home.loving, sweet-souled ladies wrote no books, recited no poems nor read essays, yet were none the less fitted to do their all-important part in placing deep and firmly the foundations of the institutions civil and religious that are the precious heirlooms of their descendants.

One of the last ladies left of the pioneer days in Augusta County, was Mrs Margaret Humphreys, near

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Greenville. Until quite recently, there were living persons who had listened to her graphic descriptions that conveyed the liveliest impression of the times when the Valley of Virginia was a frontier settlement. Where now may be seen the beautiful farms and substantial houses, her active memory recalled the log cabins, the linsey-wolsey, the short gowns, the hunting shirts, the moccasins, the pack horses, the simple living, the shoes and stockings for winter and uncommon occasions, the deer and the rifle, the fields of flax and the spinning wheel, the wool and the looms; and with them the strict attention to religious concerns, the catechising of children, the regular going to church, the reading of the Bible, and keeping Sabbath from the beginning to the end of the day; the singing of hymns and sacred songs, all blended, presented a beautiful picture of enterprise; economy, and religion in laying the foundations of society.

The compiler of these Pocahontas Sketches well remember seeing and hearing of parties in his younger days, of Scotch-Irish lineage and members of churches reared by their pioneer ancestors, who brought their love affairs to a happy understanding by the means of the hymn book or the Bible. One morning before services began in one of the oldest of the Valley churches a youthful, enamored member politely handed his hymn book to a lady friend in the pew just before him, with a pin stuck in the stanza he wished her to read. Whereupon she read these significant words:

"Let the sweet hope that thou art mine

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My life and death attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine
And crown my journey's end."

The young lady in place of blushing and whispering "Oh this is so sudden," took another plan, for she seemed to know at once of a hymn that would meet the emergency in kind and enable her to give as good as he had sent. Returning the book with the selfsame pin for a pointer, he read therein as follows:

"All that I am and all I have
Shall be forever thine.
Whate'er my duty bids me give
My willing hands resign."

The reader is left to figure out what it all came to in the lives of these young people.

Another party, of similar lineage and training, settled matters one afternoon after returning from public worship in another ancient church. They were left in the "company room" all alone, and thereupon the young man disclosed the paramount desire of his heart. This made the young lady look and feel somewhat embarrassed. But she arose and approached the centre table on which was placed the "Big Ha' Bible" in its place of honor. She looked up the 37th Psalm, and turning to her lover friend invited him to read the verses as she pointed them out. He was quickly at her side, and as her hand passed slowly from verse to verse he read what to them both ever after were memorable verses:

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"Trust in the Lord and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desire of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him and he shall bring it to pass."

From all that remains of the former presence of the Indians in our region, they never occupied it as a place for fixed permanent habitation, but for temporary resort in late Spring, Summer, and early Autumn. The existing traces of Indian occupancy all indicate such to have been the fact. At Clover Lick, Marlinton, and on the Old Field Fork of Elk are found the most that now remains indicating Indian temporary occupancy.

The most interesting trace of the kind in question is found in a meadow near Gibson's on the Old Field Fork of Elk River, twelve miles from Marlinton. This meadow was cleared about forty years ago by William Gibson, and takes the place of one of the thickest patches of laurel and alder brush that the late William Gibson says he ever worked at in all his life. After it was cleared and put in meadow, a circle appeared about 132 feet in diameter, formed of a strange grass that grows, or has not been seen, anywhere else. Mr Gibson saw similar grass in Indiana.

This circle is formed of two figures representing rattlesnakes in the act of mutually swallowing each other. One figure—the yellow rattler—symbolizes light. the black rattler typifies darkness; both combined represent the succession night and day, and illustrates the Indian

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idea of Time, that mysterious something that gives and takes life, having the power of life and death.

Here the hunters would assemble to invoke the favor of this mighty, mysterious deity, upon whom the contemplated pursuit of game, so essential to their subsistence and of their squaws and papooses, depended. Or if about to go on the war path, the braves would rally here as a rendezvous, and with their dark and bloody rites and ceremonial dances performed within or around this circle would seek to placate the same mysterious power for success over their enemies in the pending battles.

The contrast of the aims and purposes of the Indians and the pioneers is instructive and deserves more than a passing notice. With Ottowas and more particularly the Shawnees, mere subsistence in the easiest way was the paramount question at issue, and for such a purpose no region surpassed this for their uses.

With the pioneers, homes were what they wanted, where fathers and sons could be settled in communities. Along with subsistence they desired social comforts, and advantages of intelligent christian worship, and securing these their hopes and aspirations seemed realized. For their cherished hopes and aims our region was equal to most and surpassed by none under the sun. At the present day among their descendants the making of money and the enjoyment of all that money secures is the paramount issue. Mere commercialism, in a more or less modified sense, is the spirit of the new order of affairs with the posterity, the children's children of the pioneers. And for this new

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phase of human endeavor our region is equal to most and surpassed by none for all the elements of commercial wealth in the forests and mines, in the streams and oil wells.

Before concluding the first section of the Sketches of Pocahontas County; I would like to have the attention of our younger people and secure their sympathetic interest. It is my fervent desire and pleasing hope they will give these sketches of their native county close and studious attention, as it was and is for their special benefit these pages are sincerely intended and in a sense dedicated. In the good Providence of God, as I firmly believe, my beloved readers, I have been permitted to occupy sweetly respousible relation to you. I deem it one of the highest honors ever conferred upon me to have the privilege of serving you with my own best thoughts, and the thoughts of others consenting to lend the aid I so much need to make these pages all that I would have them be.

While for good and sufficient reasons my own contributions may not be marked by their depth of thought or logical or rhetorical power, still I know what conduces to earnest and useful thought when I read and study the writings of the foremost thinkers of the times, wherein great all important matters are considered, and I intend for my readers the best results obtainable from such sources. I do this believing that those young West Virginians who may honor these sketches with their attention are equal to anything I have been capable of apprehending, and that even children so termed are worthy of something better than

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mere child's play in their reading.

The way to improve is to fix the mind on some proper model or example and try to be conformed to it, and not conform the model to the actual state of the mind. To write and talk in a childish way, it seems to me, amounts to nothing more than making oneself childish, and leaving those to be instructed about where they were at first.

So far as my influence is permitted to reach the readers of these pages, I am going to write and have been writing indeed as if I were writing for devoted, sincere christians, deep and earnest thinkers and highly cultivated persons, for these are just the persons I wish all reading young people to be, and which they must be in fact to stand worthily in the solemn position to which they are likely to be called. There is no doubt in my mind, and it is a conviction that I have permitted myself with much hesitancy indeed, that our young people will be called to meet and decide the most momentous questions that have claimed the attention of men since the Reformation.

I am informed from highly trustworthy sources that no people more successfelly withstood the upas-like overshadowing of the Moslem power than the Hellenists. The reason given is that the highest and the lowest, the youngest and the oldest, vie in the veneration they show for ancestral examples. Their histories, their romances, their traditions, their legends, and their poems keep the glorious exploits of their ancestry ever fresh in their memories, and every Greek wishes to live and die worthy of such illustrious fathers. We

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have something better to emulate than they. The young Greek cherishes the memory of Solon, Pericles, Themistocles, Demosthenes, Socrates, Plato, and other names of surpassing lustre, but for real merit and goodness what are such names in comparison with those whom every young West Virginian may revere and emulate;—Washington, Henry, John Craig, and Charles Lewis.

The future of our great country will soon pass into the keeping of these very young people, for whose benefit these sketches are sincerely intended. Hence it is the genuine wish of all right feeling people that our sons and daughters may be such as one of God's holiest men of old prayed for:

"Rid me and free me from the hand of aliens whose mouth speak fraud, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood. So that our sons may be plants grown large in their youth; our daughters as corner stones, polished for the building of the temple."

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